DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 610 CS 509 408

TITLE A Study of the Reputations of Doctoral Programs in Communication.
INSTITUTION Speech Communication Association, Annandale, Va.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Research; *Departments; *Doctoral Programs; Graduate School Faculty; Higher Education; Intercultural Communication; Organizational Communication; Program Effectiveness; Rhetoric; *Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS Applied Communication

ABSTRACT

A study measured the reputations of doctoral programs in communication. Approximately 980 surveys were sent to contact people at institutions with communication disciplines. A second sample of approximately 620 names were drawn from Ph.D. level members of the Speech Communication Association (SCA) who do not teach at doctoral granting institutions. A total of 345 surveys were returned from the doctoral program faculty (for a response rate of 35%) and a total of 114 surveys were returned from the faculty who do not teach in doctoral programs (for a response rate of 18%). A total of 45 individuals indicated that they were very confident in their rankings of the top 5 programs in each specialty (communication theory and research, rhetoric, organizational communication, critical-cultural/media, applied communication, intercultural communication, and communication education) and participated in a follow-up survey. Results indicated that only 4 programs were undisputedly placed in the top quartile for each of the specialties in which they were rated. Three of those programs were rated on only 1 specialty: University of California, Berkeley in Rhetoric; Stanford University in Applied Communication; and West Virginia University in Communication Education. Northwestern University (Communication Studies) was rated in the top quartile in 3 specialties: Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, and Applied Communication. SCA is committed to producing additional studies that will provide other useful information about doctoral programs in communication. A table of data is attached. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

A Study of the Reputations of Doctoral Programs in Communication

Speech Communication Association, April 1996

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Gaudino
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SCA
SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

ED 403 610

CS 509 408

As part of its ongoing project to gather data on the communication discipline, the Research Board of the Speech Communication Association (SCA) commissioned the National Office staff to construct a study that would measure the reputations of doctoral programs in communication. At the time the study was conceived, the Research Board consisted of Ellen Wartella, University of Texas, Austin (Chair); Jesse G. Delia, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, University of Wisconsin-Madison. During the study's course, Ed Fink, University of Maryland, College Park, replaced Delia and Isa Engleberg, Prince Georges Community College, replaced Wartella as Chair. National Office staff who were assigned to the project were Bill Eadie, Associate Director; Megan Brooks and Michelle Randall, Administrative Assistants. At a key point in the project, the Research Board also called upon the counsel of Mark Hickson III, University of Alabama, Birmingham, Don Stacks, University of Miami, and Larry Barker, Auburn University, all of whom had conducted disciplinary reputational studies of various sorts.

This paper reports the results of the study. The report will provide background on the study and a description of the methodology and analysis procedures. The results are contained in tables which appear at the report's conclusion.

Background

The Research Board commissioned this study in January 1994, because its members felt that the need for data on the profession was most urgent in determining how doctoral programs were perceived generally within the discipline. In discussing the project with the SCA Administrative Committee, it was suggested that as many specialties as possible be rated. With a mandate to gather reputational data on as many specialties as possible, the staff proceeded to design a study rating fourteen specialties taken from the SCA Graduate Directory. The specialties were selected because at least ten universities had listed them in the Graduate Directory. The major area of study that was omitted by this criterion was performance studies, where only six doctoral programs had listed this area as a specialty.

The SCA Administrative Committee examined the resulting design and decided that it covered too many specialties. The Research Board met and combined the fourteen specialties into eight. The Board members also made some modifications in the design of the study.

Identification of programs

Besides the SCA *Graduate Directory*, programs were taken from the second edition of Garland Elmore's *The Communication Disciplines in Higher Education* (published jointly by the Association for Communication Administration (ACA) and the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC)). We omitted programs whose title began with "journalism" from the study, as those programs were already ranked by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). A contact person, usually either the chair of the director of graduate studies, was identified at each program, and the contact person designated the specialties that appeared for that program in the study. In several cases, specialties that the programs had designated to appear in SCA's *Graduate Directory* were omitted from this study. A few programs that decided to participate had no Ph.D. degree of their own; rather they participated in campus Ed.D. programs or in interdisciplinary

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ph.D. degree of their own; rather they participated in campus Ed.D. programs or in interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs. Some universities had more than one communication doctoral program; these were listed separately and identified by program name. A total of 68 programs were listed in the study.

Data collection

Surveys were sent to each institution's contact person in January 1995, and that person was asked to distribute a survey to each member of the graduate faculty. Approximately 980 surveys were distributed in this manner. A second sample of approximately 620 names was drawn from Ph.D. level members of SCA who did not teach at doctoral-granting institutions. Surveys were mailed directly to these individuals. In each case, a cover letter and a return envelope accompanied the survey. The task for all respondents was to designate the "top five" programs in each specialty. Some demographic data about the respondents was also collected, including their own estimate of how confident they were in their ratings. Respondents who indicated that they were very confident were asked to provide their names if they would be interested in participating in a follow-up study; a total of 45 individuals chose to provide their names for such a purpose.

Once the surveys had been distributed, the SCA National Office and the Chair of the Research Board received several complaints about the study. The most frequent of these complaints centered around the fact that journalism programs had not been included in the mass communication categories. These complaints motivated a series of meetings of the leaders of the various communication associations, and data analysis was not conducted until after discussion of the issues involved had concluded.

When the project resumed, a second data collection was undertaken in December 1995 from the 45 self-identified experts. The same survey was distributed to these individuals, but they were asked to place each program listed under each specialty into one of four equal quartiles, indicating their relative level of quality. Again, a cover letter and a return envelope was included in the mailing. A reminder mailing to these individuals was also undertaken about 45 days after the initial mailing.

Data analysis

A total of 345 surveys were returned from the doctoral program faculty, for a return rate of approximately 35%. A total of 114 surveys were returned from the faculty who did not teach in doctoral programs, for a return rate of approximately 18%. A total of 38 of the self-identified experts returned their surveys, yielding a 84% rate. As several of the surveys were returned in not fully complete form, total numbers of individuals rating each specialty vary. One of the self-identified experts returned a survey that was not complete.

We analyzed the data from the "top five" study by calculating the percentage of the total number of respondents placing each program in the top five of each specialty. Because we were concerned about the low return rate for faculty who did not teach in doctoral programs, we correlated the percentages generated by that sample with those produced by the group of respondents who taught in doctoral programs. As these correlation coefficients ranged between .73 (for Communication Education) and .97 (for Rhetoric), we concluded that we could safely combine the samples. The tables attached to this report, then, were compiled from all of the surveys that were returned.

Because the journalism programs were not included, therefore producing results that reflected the omission of a significant number of programs, we chose not to analyze the data for the specialty in Mass Communication Research. We believed that any such omissions in the area of Critical-Cultural/Media Studies were less serious in nature, so we have reported the results of that analysis here. Nevertheless, it

Studies were less serious in nature, so we have reported the results of that analysis here. Nevertheless, it is possible that some journalism programs who offer this doctoral specialty were left out of the study.

The data for the self-identified experts were analyzed by finding the mean quartile ranking for each program in each specialty (standard deviations are not reported but are available upon request from the SCA National Office). We correlated these means with the percentage of individuals who put each program in the "top five" in the original study. Those correlation coefficients ranged from -.77 (for both Rhetoric and Organizational Communication) to -.93 (for Communication Education). From these coefficients, we conclude that there was substantial consistency between the way in which the faculty respondents saw the reputations of the programs and the way the self-identified experts saw those reputations, despite the fact that each group completed the survey in a different way. Where variations occur they may do so because of changes in the programs being rated. For example, the Rhetoric and Communication department at Temple University has been substantially restructured.

The Tables

In the tables that follow, the programs are arranged in the order in which they were mentioned as being in the "top five" in the initial study. The data for the self-identified experts appear for each institution in the right hand columns, along with the rank each program received from the expert group. There is also a summary table, where each program is listed, along with the specialties on which that program was rated. The numbers in each cell indicate the highest quartile in which that program was rated for that specialty; if the two studies disagreed there is an asterisk after the quartile number.

Only four programs were undisputedly placed in the top quartile for each of the specialties in which they were rated. Three of those programs were rated on only one specialty:

- University of California, Berkeley in Rhetoric
- Stanford University in Applied Communication
- West Virginia University in Communication Education

Northwestern University (Communication Studies) was rated in the top quartile in three specialties: Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, and Applied Communication.

Six other programs received all first quartile rankings from at least one of the two rater groups.

- University of Colorado, Boulder: Communication Theory and Research, Organizational Communication
- Michigan State University (Communication): Communication Theory and Research, Organizational Communication, Applied Communication, and Intercultural Communication
- University of Pennsylvania (Annenberg School for Communication): Communication Theory and Research, Critical-Cultural/Media Studies, and Applied Communication
- University of Southern California (newly restructured Annenberg School of Communication): Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, Organizational Communication, Critical-Cultural/Media Studies, Applied Communication, and Intercultural Communication
- University of Texas at Austin (Speech Communication): Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, Organizational Communication, Applied Communication, and Intercultural Communication
- University of Wisconsin-Madison (Communication Arts): Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, and Critical-Cultural/Media Studies

Four programs were rated in the first quartile by at least one of the rater groups for all but one of their

Four programs were rated in the first quartile by at least one of the rater groups for all but one of their specialties:

- University of California, Santa Barbara: first quartile Communication Theory and Research, Organizational Communication, and Intercultural Communication; second quartile Applied Communication
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Speech Communication): first quartile Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, and Organizational Communication; second quartile Applied Communication
- University of Iowa: first quartile Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, and Critical-Cultural/Media Studies; second quartile Organizational Communication
- Purdue University: first quartile Communication Theory and Research, Organizational Communication, and Applied Communication; second quartile Rhetoric

Conclusion

Because what is to be rated cannot be clearly defined, reputational studies by their nature will always be flawed in some manner. The current study could be faulted for combining the qualities to be rated into one category and for combining, for rating purposes, several research areas (e.g., Communication Theory and Research and Applied Communication) that might be considered distinct. Nevertheless, this study represents the first attempt in some time to produce a comprehensive ranking of communication doctoral programs within specialties and should thus prove to provide some degree of helpful information to students, faculty, and administrators. SCA is committed to producing additional studies that will provide other useful information about doctoral programs in communication. Comments on this study and suggestions for future studies are welcome.

Notes to Table:

- Numbers indicate the **quartile** into which two groups of raters placed this program (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th)
- An **asterisk** indicates that one of the rater groups put this program in a lower quartile.
- Click on categories to see **detailed tables** for programs within each specialty

1995-96 Ratings of Communication Doctoral Specialties in U.S. Universities

University	Department	Comm. Theory & Research	Rhetoric	Org. Comm.	Critical-Cultural/ Media	Applied Comm.	Intercult. Comm.	Comm. Education
Alabama	Communication	3*		4	3*	3*		
Arizona	Communication	1		1*	3*	1	2	
Arizona State	Communication	1*	3	1	3	2	1	
Bowling Green	Interpersonal Comm.	4	3*	3		4	3	
California, Berkeley	Rhetoric		1					
California, San Diego	Communication	3		3	1*		1*	
California, Santa Barbara	Communication	1		1*		2	1*	
Colorado, Boulder	Communication	1*		1				
Connecticut	Comm. Sciences	4		3*		4		

Cornell	Communication	4		3*		3	3	
Denver	Human Comm. Studies	3	3*	3	4	4	3	
Florida State	Communication	3	3*	3				
Georgia	Speech Comm.	2	2			2	2*	
Hawaii	Communication	3*		4			1	
Howard	Human Comm. Studies		3*	4			1	
University	**Department**	**Comm. Theory & Research**	**Rhetoric**	**Org. Comm.**	**Critical-Cultural/ Media**	**Applied Comm.**	**Intercult. Comm.**	**Comm. Education**
Illinois	Inst. for Comm. Research	2*			1		2	
Illinois	Speech Comm.	1	1	1		2		
Indiana	Speech Comm.	2	1	2		1*	3	1*
Indiana	Telecomm.				2		4	
Iowa	Comm. Studies	1	1	2*	1			
Kansas	Comm. Studies	1*	2	1			2	
Kent State	Comm. Studies	3						2
Kentucky	Communication	2		2*	4	2	3*	
Louisiana State	Speech Comm.	3	2*	3*	4	4		
Maryland, College Park	Speech Comm.	2*	2	2		1		
Massachusetts, Amherst	Communication	2*	2		1*	3	2*	
Michigan State	Communication	1		1		1	1*	
Michigan State	Mass Media					2		
Minnesota, Minneapolis	Speech-Comm.	2	1		2*			
Minnesota, St. Paul	Rhetoric		2*					
Missouri	Communication	3*	3	3*	3*			2*
University	**Department**	**Comm. Theory & Research**	**Rhetoric**	**Org. Comm.**	**Critical-Cultural/ Media**	**Applied Comm.**	**Intercult. Comm.**	**Comm. Education**
Nebraska	Comm. Studies	3*	3*	3*	4	3*		2
New Mexico	Comm. & Journalism	2*	4	2		2*	1	2*
New York U.	Culture & Comm.				2			4
Northwestern	Comm. Studies	1	1			1		
Northwestern	Radio-TV-Film				1	3	2*	3
Ohio U	Interpersonal Comm.	1*	3	1	3	2		
Ohio U	Telecomm.				3	3		
Ohio State	Communication	2	2		2			
Oklahoma	Communication	2		2		1*	1	1*
Oklahoma State	Speech Comm.	4	4	4			4	
Pennsylvania	Annenberg School	1*			1	1		

Pennsylvania State	Speech Comm.	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
Pittsburgh	Communication	4	1		3			
Purdue	Communication	1	2	1		1		
Regent	Communication	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Rensselaer Polytech. Inst.	Lang., Lit. & Comm.	4	4	3*		3*	4	4
Rutgers	Communication	3		1*				
University	**Department**	**Comm. Theory & Research**	**Rhetoric**	**Org. Comm.**	**Critical-Cultural/ Media**	**Applied Comm.**	**Intercult. Comm.**	**Comm. Education**
South Florida	Communication	2*	3*	2	3	1*		
Southern California	Annenberg School	1	1*	1	1	1	1	
Southern Illinois	Speech Comm.	2*	3	3	3*	3	3	2*
Southern Mississippi	Speech Comm.	4	4	4				
Stanford	Communication					1		
SUNY-Albany	Communication	2*		3			3*	
SUNY-Buffalo	Communication	3		2			2*	
Temple	Mass Media & Telecomm.	4		4	2	3*	3*	
Temple	Rhetoric & Comm.	3				3		
Tennessee, Knoxville	Communications	4				4		4
Texas, Austin	Radio-TV-Film	2*			1		2	
Texas, Austin	Speech Comm.	1	1	1		1*	1*	
Utah	Communication	2	2	1	1			
Washington	Speech Comm.	1*	2	2	2		1	1
Washington State	Communication	3	4	3*		4	4	
Wayne State	Communication	4	3	3*	4	3	4	3
West Virginia	Communication							1
Wisconsin, Madison	Comm. Arts	1	1*		1			
University	**Department**	**Comm. Theory & Research**	**Rhetoric**	**Org. Comm.**	**Critical-Cultural/ Media**	**Applied Comm.**	**Intercult. Comm.**	**Comm. Education**

This page was updated on August 08, 1996 by Ted Spencer, SCA Publications Manager
tspencer@scassn.org